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INDIA'S NATIONAL PAN-GENRE MUSIC MAGAZINE

the Score magazine

COVER STORY

TULSI KUMAR

TALKS ABOUT HER FATHER, GULSHAN KUMAR, MUSIC & LIFE

STAR OF THE MONTH

DHRUV GHANEKAR

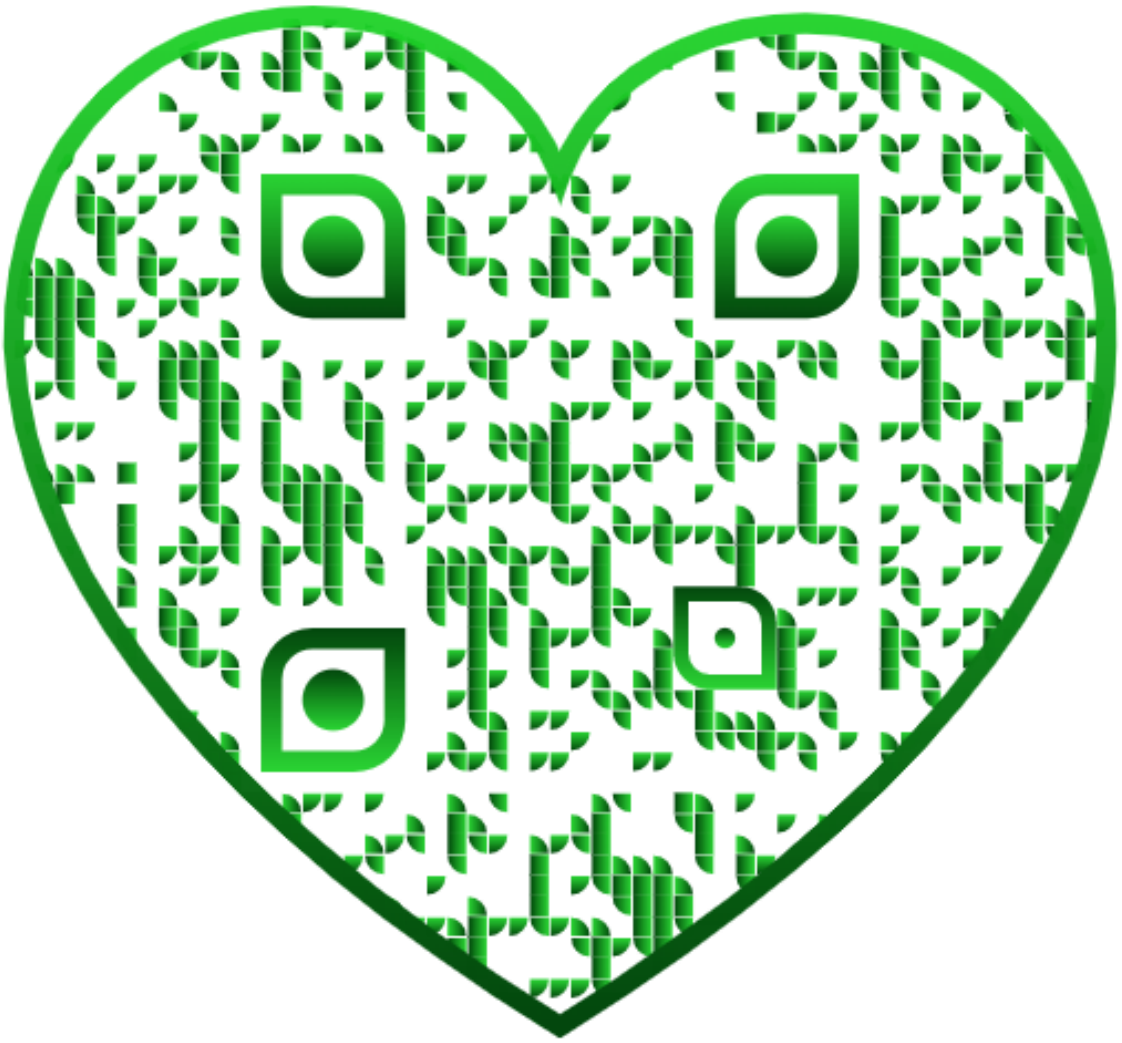
ON HIS RECENTLY RELEASED ALUBM 'VOYAGE'

BAND OF THE MONTH

ARKA

ON CLASSICAL MUSIC BEING THE SOUL OF THEIR MUSIC

ALSO INSIDE : EIGHT ULTIMATE INDIAN MUSIC FESTIVALS



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the edit PAD

This month the Internet went abuzz of over how Monica Dogra's campaign for the LGBT didn't add up. Without going into the merit of the case, or the cause, I would like to throw light on something else: the modus operandi: Crowd funding for social causes.

Celebrities seldom like to take responsibility for what they endorse, and recently there was a big hue and cry when the Bihar High Court sent a notice to Madhuri Dixit for her endorsement for a well-known noodle brand. I whole-heartedly endorse the case for punitive action over irresponsible celebrity endorsements only because their endorsement affects choices made by millions. Celebrities must be held accountable for their campaigns and only then will celebrities become fully aware of what they are campaigning for.

In the case of Monica Dogra, she took up logistics of her campaign herself, resulting in her becoming clearly and fully accountable for the campaigns successes and failures. It is easy journalism to run hammer and tong after people who open their actions up for public scrutiny, but it takes courage to encourage those who open themselves to debate. Today Monica cannot pass the buck for her actions but I respect her for taking the risk of putting herself out there in this noble albeit miscalculated step.

Crowd-funding will soon change the face of celebrity campaigns. In an increasingly transparent world, celebrity responsibility is the need of the hour.

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JOYO

JF-300 IRONMAN

It's a much-imitated design for a reason, and Joyo's IronMan apes the sound with a sweet, fat amp-like drive that covers all styles of rock and blues, while the high/low peak switch offers aggressive clipping and softer drives respectively. It'll thicken up single coils a treat, but we preferred the sounds with humbuckers for beefy barre chords and slick, sustaining solos.

JF-34 US DREAM

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The pxl-live is the newest member of the Joyo pxl series programmable pedals controllers. The pxl-live has dual 4 channel outputs like the pxlpro,and dual (relay) switch outputs for channel switching, it also has midi out.

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Tulsi Kumar

She's one of the most sought after singers of today and recently married to the love of her life. She also happens to be the daughter of the T-Series founder and film producer, Gulshan Kumar. The beautiful and talented Tulsi Kumar has come a long way in her career and only intends to grow over the coming years in her musical journey. Score got an opportunity to sit down for a chat with this lovely songstress to discuss her music and life.

You were basically born and brought up with a musical background, belonging to the illustrious T-Series family. Were you naturally drawn to the idea of being a musician? What are some experiences that you can recall that solidified your decision to become a singer?

My father had a great eye for spotting talent and he did introduce a lot of singers and muscians in the fratenity. Music was always around me and as a child. My dad used to hear me humming songs, while watching songs on television and found out that I have an extremely sweet tone. Seeing my interest and bend towards music, he did want me to become a singer and today where ever he is I am sure he will be extremely proud of me. At a very tender age of 6 he put me into Suresh Wadker's academy where I was trained in light classical music for a few years and after which I started training under Pt. Vinod Mishraji. This is how my journey in the musical field began. Till today I continue to learn from him.

Did entering the scene feel natural given that you probably would have been exposed to the industry growing up, or was it still a new experience for you? What are some experiences that you had that are unforgettable to you?

Definitely when you have a big family name attached to you, that's the common perception people have that it would have probably been easier. You are grown up in that atmosphere, with the people from the music and glam industry around you, so you never feel like an alien when you start working in the same field. I do feel without any doubts that there is a lot of support to get the initial break but at the end it's all about sustaining in this competitive industry and of course striking the right cords with your listeners. Like my initial recordings as a fresher were truly unforgettable. The anxiety, the anxiousness to charm people with my voice was always at its peak.

What was it like to work on your first album, 'Love Ho Jaaye'? How did the idea come about and manifest?

Love ho Jaaye was my debut album which released in the year 2009. Although I debuted in films as a playback singer in 2006, it was a conscious decision to launch my album a few later just to see how my audience was accepting my voice. I always wanted to do an abumn and it took me almost one and a half year to work on it and it had 8 fresh compositions, the music of which was by Monty Sharma, of Sawariya fame and lyrics were by Sameerji. The album had a mix of different kinds of songs one of which was a foot tapping dance number, called Radhe shyaam whereas another being an out an out romantic song called jis dil ko ishq ho jaaye. Sufi and punjabi genres were also added to the albumn and thats how we got the name Love Ho jaaye wherein the love was expessed in different languages and genres.

Who are some of your favorite singers to listen to? Who were you inspired by growing up?

Well it is definitely Lata Mangeshkarji who is my all time favorite singer.. I truly believe her to be the goddess of music and she in herself is an institution of music. Anyone who aspires to be a singer can actually learn a lot by just listening to her songs. She has sung some of the most beautiful compositions and just feels that its flowing out of her with so much ease. She is someone who inspires me thoroughly. Apart from that, I listen to all my co-singers. from the earlier times it has to be Kishor Da for his versatility in singing, Mhd. Rafi saab for the depth in his voice he rendered. Apart from all these learned people my father has been my biggest inspiration and the major reason for me being attached to music. I have inculcated the love for music all from him.

TOP 10 *songs by* TULSI KUMAR

Piya Aaye Na (Aashiqui 2)

Hum Mar Jayenge (Aashiqui 2)

Tum Jo Aaye
(Once Upon A Time In Mumbai)

Saanson Ne (Dabangg 2)

Kuch Toh Hua Hai
(Singham Returns)

Mera Mann Kehne Laga
(Nautanki Saala!)

Humko Pyar Hua (Ready)

Tu Hi Rab Tu Hi Dua
(Dangerous Ishhq)

Naam E Wafa (Creature 3D)

Tere Bin Nahi Laage
(Ek Paheli Leela)

In 'Once Upon a Time in Mumbai', you got to collaborate with the great Rahet Fateh Ali Khan. Tell us about that experience.

My song tum jo aaye in the film 'Once upon a time in mumbai' has been one of the most important songs in my career. This song actually brought me a lot of fame and appreciation and has been the turning point in my career. As far as collaborating with the great Rahet Fateh Ali Khan saab goes, I wasn't aware at that time when I was rendering that this going to be a duet along him. Pritam da called me to try the song in my voice. It was an out an out romantic soft number. So I went, recorded my part and came back. 2 months later, there were certain changes in the lyrics for

which I was called to re-record certain parts and that's when I heard that it was a duet alongside Rahet saab. It was a very big thing for me and a great honor to be singing alongside such a living legend. I was glad that I did not know well in advance that it was a song with Rahet saab as it would have made me extremely nervous. But it's gratifying for me that my voice gelled well with him and this song garnered so much appreciation.

You just got married recently. Congratulations! How did you meet your husband Hitesh Ralhan? Tell us about that journey.

Thank you very much! Hitesh and me met at a common friends wedding a year ago where he showed keen interest in me. We exchanged numbers and that's how we became friends. 6 months of knowing each other we started dating and soon he popped the question in the most romantic way in Mumbai. Surprised me with a ring and proposed to me in the most filmi way by going down on his knees which every girl would dream of. That's how we got engaged and within a few months tied the knot. It's been a beautiful journey and there is a lot to see further. I feel ecstatic to have a husband who is also my best friend now. Along with him, I am truly blessed to be a part of a family who supports me in all what i do and encourages me to do better in my career.

Being in the entertainment field is hectic; to say the least and can take a toll on one's personal life if not handled properly. What in your mind is the secret to balancing personal and professional life?

There definitely has to be the right balance between their two worlds. I have recently gotten married and I hope I am able to juggle well between the both. More so over, I think you need great support from your family to help you perform well between your two lives. If they understand you and your work commitments , then surely you surpass all the hurdles if every come your way. Being a girl, I think it's important for me also to give my 100% to the responsibilities since I have more roles to play now. But as I said earlier I am blessed to have very understanding and loving in-laws ad of course a great husband who understands me and my work well.

What are some projects that you have in the pipeline for the next year? Anything you can give us a sneak peek about?

Well I have a couple of films lined up. One is Junooniyat in which I have sung a song for meet bros anjjan. Then there is a song in kunal kohli's phir se which is composed by Jeet Ganguly. Of course the current releases are the 2 songs from leela both of which are composed by Amaal Malik. I am happy that I have gotten to explore a different genre of song. Saiyaan superstar is completely fast paced, foot tapping number. It has helped me show a different side of me as a singer. Apart from that am collaborating with a UK artist Arjun for one of the songs where we have come together and recreated an old song of mine. There is another single that I am working on, the making of music of which is under process. I have also turned into a voiceover artist for a youtube channel called Kids hut.

Given a chance to work with any director and singer of your choosing, who would it be and why?

As far as music directors are concerned, someone whom I am longing to work with would be A R Rahman sir, I think he is in true sense a great musician and hope to work with him sometime soon. Another music composer I am really fond of is M M Kreem saab. Would definitely like to work with them. When it comes to singers, I have pretty much worked with most of the current ones in the fraternity. Someone that I haven't had a chance to work with till now and who has a very soulful voice is Atif Aslam. I wish to collaborate with him also. Let's see when that happens!

What is your favorite Bollywood soundtrack of all time and why?

It is very difficult to choose one soundtrack as bollywood music is very vast and I have lots of favorites artists and favorite songs. But what I can think of right is a beautiful song composed by Madam Mohanji called Lag ja gale. It is flawlessly rendered by Lata Mangeshkarji. That's one particular song which is evergreen for me. Another rendition of Lataji is Tujse naraz nai zindagi. The feel and the depth which she has sung this song with even though it is an easy flowing composition, it still brings tears in my eyes.

> *"I truly believe her (Lata ji) to be the goddess of music and she in herself is an institution of music. Anyone who aspires to be a singer can actually learn a lot by just listening to her songs. She has sung some of the most beautiful compositions and just feels that its flowing out of her with so much ease.*

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GRAND SOUND SYSTEM

The chassis has been redesigned not only to provide a more elegant look but also to accommodate a new 8w x 8w speaker system, which delivers the PX-160's remarkable sounds with the richness that they deserve. This speaker system is open to the front but also ported to the back, which provides remarkable sound when the PX-160 is placed against a wall. This also allows it to easily be used in a classroom or other environment where the sound will be projected towards the audience. Far superior to brands whose speaker systems are aimed mostly downward

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The PX-160 also features newly developed string ensemble sounds. These rich stereo strings sound wonderful by themselves or layered with the PX-160's grand pianos, electric pianos, harpsichord and more. The electric pianos have also been updated providing some dynamic sounds derived from Casio's award winning PX-5S stage piano. The PX-160 provides split and layer capability allowing you to play bass in your left hand and have two layered tones in your right. Duet mode allows the keyboard to be split into two equal ranges, so the student and teacher can use the piano simultaneously. A two track recorder can even record and playback your practice and performances. The optional CS-67 stand puts the PX-160 at the proper height and the optional SP-33 pedal system provides the same 3 pedal functionality as a grand piano.

GET CONNECTED

For quiet listening, the PX-160 now has two headphone outputs which are located on the front of the instrument and for those who are performing with other amplification, the PX-160 also features 1/4" left and right line outputs on the rear panel. The PX-160 continues Casio's tradition of providing "class compliant" USB connectivity on Privia digital pianos. This allows the PX-160 to be used with Mac or Windows computers without the need for downloading drivers. Class Compliant USB MIDI also allows the PX-160 to be used as a controller with the Apple iPad simply with the use of Apple's Camera Connection Kit.

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“The relationship I’ve shared with QSC has been absolutely amazing. I know that the QSC speakers are honestly better than anything else that I’ve tried – I’ve had lots of keyboard amps and powered speakers etc coz I’ve always been into this kinda thing and I’m very picky about my sound. The QSC’s give me exactly what I’m looking for, every single time!

'Keyboard Wizard' Jordan Rudess relies on QSC's house of K for his signature awesome sound

Anyone who's a fan of progressive rock cannot deny the impact that Dream Theatre have had on the genre since their arrival. With distinct sounds and unique time signatures, Dream Theatre are one of few distinguished bands who've contributed greatly in the evolution of the soundscape of progressive rock music. And while all the members of the group have had an equally vital role to play, the GRAMMY-nominated group's keyboardist and composer Jordan Rudess is a definite stand-out.

A self-proclaimed App guy and music educator, Rudess has worked on a piano album that users can interact with via their IOS device and he is also the founder of Wizdommusic.com, a musical instrument App site dedicated to pushing the boundaries of technology to create exciting Apps for making music, including MorphWiz, SampleWiz, Geo Synthesizer and the new EARWIZARD. Rudess also has a campaign onPledgemusic.comnow to raise money for the upcoming recording of his orchestral composition, Explorations for Keyboard and Orchestra.

But what makes Rudess so well respected and revered are his compositions and his sound. Often called the Keyboard Wizard, Rudess is known for the tremendous variety of sounds that he uses in the studio and onstage, and making use of a number of different keyboards and tambers. These days, his rig consists of the Korg Kronos, Roland V-Synth, Zen Riffer and Haken Continuum. And giving his compositions the fidelity and power he desires are the QSC K and KW Series, which are a vital part of his monitoring rig – both on stage as well as in the studio.

Rudess is officially a part of QSC's K for Musicians family, and he couldn't be more excited about it as he shares, "The relationship I've shared with QSC has been absolutely amazing. I know that the QSC speakers are honestly better than anything else that I've tried – I've had lots of keyboard amps and powered speakers etc coz I've always been into this kinda thing and I'm very picky about my sound. The QSC's give me exactly what I'm looking for, every single time!"

The ace keyboardist & composer shares that his personal rig consists of the QSC KW122 and the QSC K10s, and he confesses that he uses them everywhere! He says "They're amazing – they are powerful, clean and well built. I've never had a performing speaker that has made me so happy! They sound so good - whether it's at a gig or just a jam where I need to be loud and clean, they always deliver. I also use them at my home studio, and I had them when I did my Dream Theatre sessions for the latest album. Whenever I needed to present to somebody an idea that I had, I knew that I had the perfect speakers to play out of with the confidence that the guys would hear the exact sound that I had in my head! And even if I have to do any kinda presentation or any clinic anywhere and it involves having monitor speakers, I always ask to arrange for the QSC's coz I just have so much faith and confidence in them!"

Jordan mentions that he was first introduced to the sound of QSC while traveling to various music stores to present technology clinics, where, the sound was so good that it caught his attention. And he discovered that the loudspeakers were QSC.

"I do a lot of clinics around the world - whenever I visited a clinic that had a truly professional environment I'd notice these QSC speakers on the floor and when I'd start to play I'd notice the huge difference in quality. So I'd ask my tech, 'What kinda speakers are those? They're amazing!'. After several such instances, I was convinced that we absolutely had to have these coz I hadn't heard a sound like that before, and though the monitors that I used previously were really good, listening to my sound on the QSC was like an awakening – it was so dynamic - The sound really stood out for me! And getting the QSCs as a part of my personal rig has been the best decision ever!"

Talking about the kind of impact the QSCs have had on his work, Rudess exclaims "Being a synthesist, I make my living making sound and I am hyperaware and sensitive to sound. The tones I use range from things like piano or the organ to strings and pretty much every other sound. And I believe the composition really has to kinda breathe with you if it has to sound good. When you get that kinda sound from your speaker, that's when you know they're really good. The QSC speakers are incredible. Knowing that I have the QSCs is like an exhalation for me – they allow me to be comfortable and relax because the sounds that I play are just what I hear."

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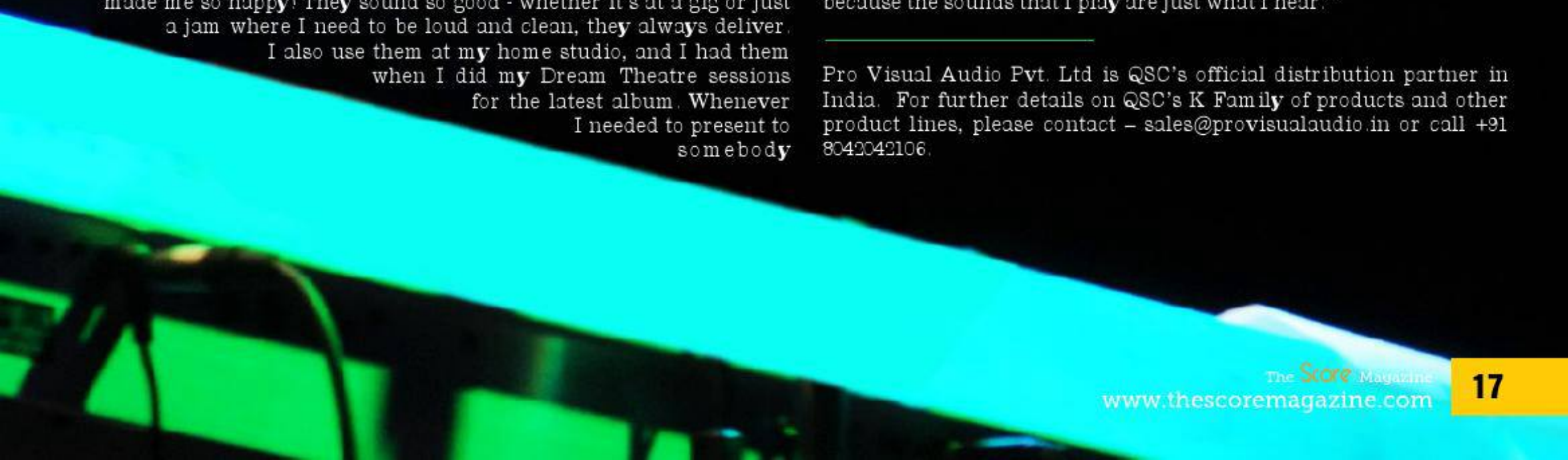

A WORLD OF PERCUSSION

ROLAND recently introduced the new Octapad SPD-20X percussion pad with new features and sounds as an upgrade from the still popular SPD-20. Featuring all the original sounds from its predecessor plus a large selection of new sounds for Indian percussion styles, Octapad SPD-20X has eight cushioned rubber pads that provide a great feel and accurate triggering. The travel-friendly OCTAPAD SPD-20X is a ready companion from small groups to large-scale ensembles.

Interestingly, the SPD-20X features over 700 total sounds and 99 patches including percussion instruments from around the world, acoustic and electronic drum sounds and many sound effects. The pad also includes 45 Indian percussion sounds newly recorded for the SPD-20X.

For all percussion board users, SPD-20X comes as a good news, especially for SPD-20 users since the board is just as easy to operate and comes with the addition of a friendly matrix menu on the top panel that makes navigation a breeze and an LCD that shows patch/sound names and other information with buttons are illuminated for visibility in dark playing environments.

A versatile, self-contained percussion instrument which is briefcase size for easy travel, the SPD-20X includes a broad selection of world percussion, with eight cushioned rubber pads that provide even and accurate triggering with excellent isolation between pads. They are connect-compatible accompanied by ROLAND pads and pedals to the four trigger inputs to create a mini drum kit or expanded percussion setup. It is also easy to enhance percussion sounds with the six onboard effects.

The SPD-20X also includes an SD card slot, a feature not available in the original SPD-20 which allows players to store patches and setups for different gigs, and to share them with other SPD-20X users.

Among the effects, reverb and delay are on hand for rich spatial ambience. There's also a chorus effect for adding width and depth, as well as a flanger for achieving all kinds of tonalities. The SPD-20X also includes compression and EQ and other powerful tools for adding studio-quality punch and polish to your percussion sounds.

The OCTAPAD SPD-20X gives you a diverse arsenal of top-quality percussion sounds in one portable instrument. You have sounds for any musical situation at your fingertips, all of which are freely assignable to the pads in any arrangement you like. There's no need to haul around a large collection of acoustic percussion instruments anymore—the road-tough SPD-20X has everything you need in a convenient, briefcase-size package.

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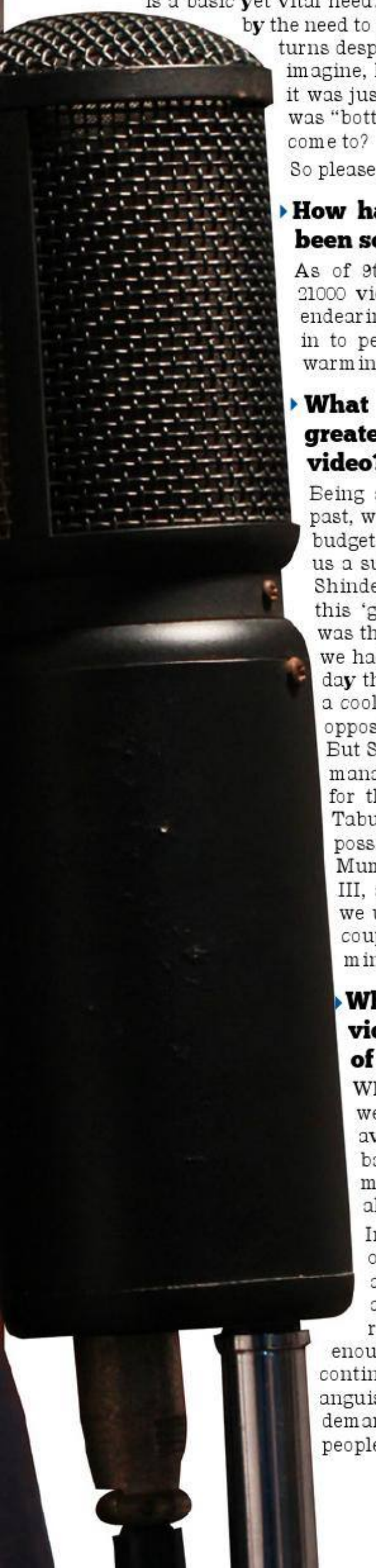
SNEHA RAMESH

BOONDEIN

Set in Raag Bhairavi, BOONDEIN sings of the tears of the 'suffering millions' while a fortunate lot, thoughtlessly, splurge away this precious, life-sustaining liquid. It is a prayer to the people of our world... SAVE WATER! Here KC Loy talks about Boondein and his association with Culture Machine.



Could you tell us in brief about your new music video "Boondein"

Our latest release, ironically titled "Boondein", sings about the paucity of the precious life-giving liquid, "water" and how we have taken it for granted. It also represents the scary possibility of a world without it.

I came up with a simple story about an unfortunate little boy and his travails for a drop of water to quench his baby sister's thirst. Shot on the city streets, the film, shows, in real time, how drinking water is a basic yet vital need. Toward the end of the video, blinded by the need to quench his baby sister's thirst, the boy turns desperate and steals a bottle of water. Just imagine, he didn't steal money, jewels or a toy, it was just water. I know, many will say, hey it was "bottled water"... Well, what has the world come to?

So please ...Save water!! Share water!!

How has the reception of this video been so far from the people?

As of 9th June 2015 we've received around 21000 views, 73 likes along with some really endearing comments. People have been calling in to personally congratulate us on a heart-warming song and film.

What in your opinion was the greatest challenge of this particular video?

Being associated with Indie projects in the past, we were used to working on really tight budget. However Culture Machine funded us a superb team of professionals, Shreyash Shinde and Tabu Kaariya, who came up with this 'gem' of a film. Our greatest problem was that the rain clouds were closing in and we had to release the film on May 27th. The day the kids were to shoot, turned out to be a cool, breezy day with a slight overcast as opposed to hot, grimy and the Sun ablaze. But Shreyash cleverly angled the shots and managed to deliver some masterpieces. As for the scenes where Ravi and I perform, Tabu and Shreyash discovered the aridest possible location, about 50kms from Mumbai. Armed with a cannon 5D Mark III, a face light, a reflector (the ones that we use in a car to protect it from heat), a couple of cheese sandwiches and gallons of mineral water, we took on the day.

What inspired you to make this video in the lines of the frivolity of a man with regards water?

Whether at home, office or restaurants, we probably drink the best filtered water available and callously leave behind, barely sipped glasses, bottles, etc. We must make it a point to finish or carry along the bottle that we've opened.

In Maharashtra, the regions on the other side of the Sahyadri do not receive adequate rainfall. They need as many as reservoirs as possible along with rainwater harvesting. With barely enough water to drink, the water mafia continues to have a field day. With a song of anguish, we intend to awaken the masses to demand for the rights of these unfortunate people. Potable water has to be termed as a fundamental right for every living being.

Can you share any incident that provoked you to choose this topic?

A rocker at heart, Ravi presented a piece of music that he called Bhairavi Blues. It was so haunting, arid and strong that I needed to come up with a tune along with Lyrics that would evoke thoughts of a sandy desert and parched thirst. While writing this song, images of an old Hindi film kept flashing in my mind. It was about a major drought that India had faced many years ago. The song in that film was so haunting "Allah megh de megh de pani de..." that I have goose bumps every time I even hum it!

Our song needed to have a message that would do the same to the audience of this day.

Ravi and I, often look back at that day, a year ago, with awe.

You targeted this video mainly to the Youth of the Nation. How do you think they can contribute to bring about a change?

The youth of today are sharper and more in tune with the world than we credit them to be. So "catch them young" I say. Make them aware of this problem! Let them feel it deep inside... and who knows, you might just find one of them on a future edition of Ted talks, with a super solution on the worlds water problem.

You brought about a beautiful comparison between a cushy lifestyle of towns and cities versus that of villages in India. How did this idea crop up?

I am an ardent trekker and most of our trips have taken us to tiny villages where food is as awesome as its scenic beauty. But on one particular trip, coming down Bhimashankar, in the midst of a blistering summer, we unknowingly finished our supply of water. We were halfway down the hill when we noticed, the trees had begun to thin out. Deforestation sucks! No... literally! The Sun sucked every ounce of water from our body. That day, we realized, what "Death by dehydration" could entail. If it wasn't for our quick footed village buddies who rushed back with some water, we'd surely have been hospitalized... at the least.

p.s. Water never tasted that good before.

What were you struggles in bringing about this video?

We felt this song needed a large platform for the whole world to see and so we tried approaching some corporate firms who could perceive the way we did. Some were enthusiastic but the decision makers weren't "in", while others dilly-dallied. Both, Ravi and I felt strongly that the song had to be released right now and that's when Culture Machine walked in.

How did the association with Culture Machine help in the entire process? Why did you choose them?

I've been associated with Culture Machine for the past 10 months. They are an enthusiastic bunch of fellas. Mehul, who has been my anchor point at CM, has a strong marketing and Geek team, supporting his every move. They really care for their artists and surprisingly understand their artistic temperaments and eccentricities. All at Culture Machine instantly fell in love with BOONDEIN and pulled up a team, headed by Chandrika to exclusively work on this. And the rest as they say... was history.

Do you have a message for the readers of The Score Magazine? Anything interesting you would like to share perhaps?

Being 'Indie' is all about being independent! Free to create your own piece of art, without somebody else dictating. So if the works of any Indie artist moves you, don't hold back. Let them know that you loved it by LIKE-ing, SHARE-ing, COMMENT-ING & also BUY-ing their music (even if you can easily download the tracks for free). Support free thought... Support Indie!

BAND OF THE MONTH

ARKA

and a

With their debut album 'And a Half' paving ways in uncharted territories, the Arkans are reaching out for the sun and taking us with them on a mystical music journey. With a beautiful blend of classical music with flamenco, rock, jazz and funk with the subtle style only the Arkans have mastered, 'And a Half' is the album we have all unknowingly thirsted for. The Arkans, as they like to call themselves comprise of six extremely talented musicians – Kanjira Maestro Selva Ganesh, Vocalist Karthik, Flautist Ravichandra Kulur, Drummer Gino Banks, Bassist Mishko M'ba and Guitarist Santhosh Chandran. Arka's Selva Ganesh talks to The Score about living in the studio while developing 'And a Half' and classical music being the soul of Arka's music among other things.

How did the Arkans come together? Whose idea was it?

It's almost 3 years back that I had met Ravi and Karthik in Kolkata for a concert. When we met, we experienced such mystic vibes amongst us that we thought we should work in unison and thus, ARKA was formed.

What genre of music would you say that Arka is inclined to creating?

ARKA is inclined to create contemporary music with Indian classical as its soul. Our genre can be best described as contemporary fusion as we strive to blend different genres like Rock, Pop, Jazz, Flamenco, Indian classical and so on.

Arka means the sun in Sanskrit. Why did you choose Arka and how does the Sun inspire your music?

I have been a part of Shakti and during that period I realized that music is like fire. Music has the potential to melt hearts, and when we composed ARKA we all thought that the music is piping hot. Thus, we named the band as the biggest source of fire – the sun.

How has the reception of 'And a Half' been so far?

'And a Half' has received an overwhelming response so far. But what amazes me more is that this album is being appreciated by not only youngsters and music fans, instead, it is being liked by everyone who has heard it till now.

Being your debut album, what is the message behind 'And a half'?

'And a Half' gives out a very important message that it is imperative to practice the track numerous times before recording it.

Can you tell us about the song line up of 'And a half'? Of all the songs in the album, which was the most difficult to work on?

Initially, every track was challenging since the rhythmic scale of each track is fairly complicated and to get a hang of it was slightly tricky. But once we cracked the pattern, we ensured that every instrument gets equal weightage and the line-up becomes incredible.

Tell us the most memorable experience you guys had working on 'And a Half'.

While we were working on the album, we all had practically migrated to my studio – Triplicane. We ate, drank, slept and actually dedicated all the time to develop 'And a Half'. It was truly an experience that none of us will ever forget.

What music and bands do you draw inspiration from?

'Shakti' has been, and will always be our biggest source of inspiration.

Which is each of the band member's favourite instruments to work with?

The beauty of ARKA is the love and respect we have for each other. We all are harmonious in approach and thus, all instruments are each other's favorite.

If there's one thing you'd like to change about Indian music, what would it be?

The Indian music industry is so expansive and versatile that there is unlimited scope to learn from each aspect. And thus, I think nothing should change about our industry.

What are your thoughts on the average listener's exposure to independent indie music?

In today's time because of social media and internet, people share and listen to different types of music. Though people have become more receptive towards other genres, it is complicated for them to specifically categorize indie music.

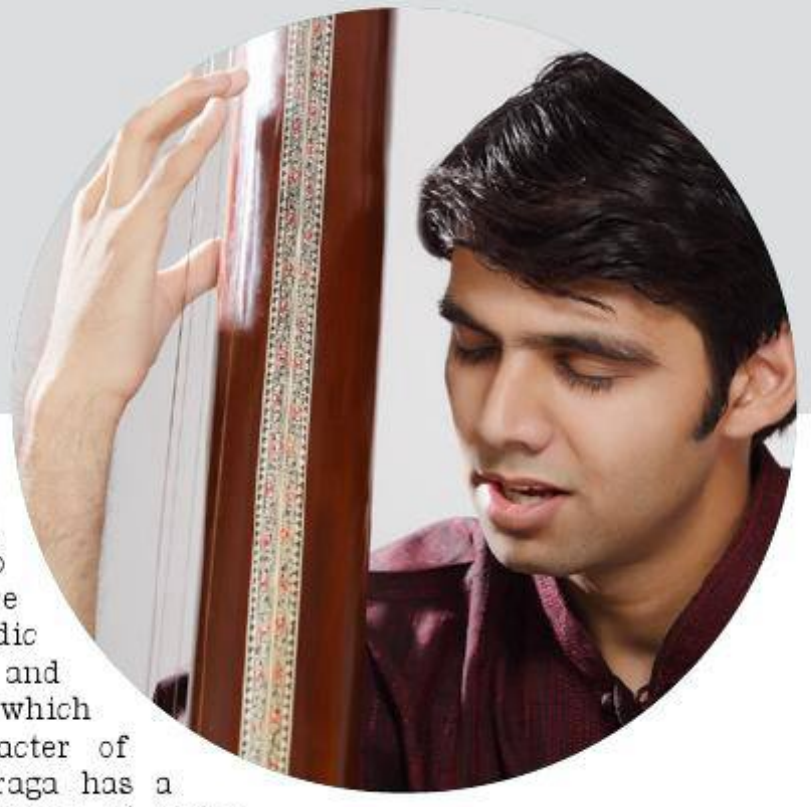
So far, you've done a few live performances. How was the experience and which is your favourite place to perform?

We have almost performed nine gigs in a span of six months. Each performance has received a tremendous response and in some cities people have actually given us a standing ovation, which to us is a matter of prestige. However, Bengaluru and Mumbai has been the most loving city.

What next for Arka? What can we look forward to?

We are currently scheduled for a U.S. tour and will also perform in various music festivals in and outside India.

A PEEK INTO THE RAGA SYSTEM



Indian classical music is generally perceived as being spiritual and fascinating, yet complex with infinite scales, moods and a ton of rules. But I think it's important to understand that just like any other form of music, Indian classical music has a system in place which helps you understand it piece by piece. Yes, there are infinite amount of scales and melodies but there many other factors which play a decisive role such as specific combinations of notes, emotions or moods , time of the day, to name a few.

Raga system is the fundamental concept on which Indian music is based. Raga can be defined as a certain combination of notes with a defined order, duration and mood. It is sometimes understood as being equivalent to Western Scales and Modes. However, a Raga is much more detailed in terms of melodic movements, emotion and approach to each note. In Indian classical music, there is always a root note 'Sa', which is considered to be the principle note in the formation of any scale or group of notes. For instance, a C major scale would be all natural notes where 'C' would be the root note which is sung or played as the 'Sa' in Indian music. In reference to this 'Sa', other 6 notes or 'Swars' are determined (Re, Ga, Ma , Pa, Dha, Ni just like in the western music such as Do, Re , Mi, Fa, So, La , Ti) . If you picture a piano then in an octave there will be 12 notes including the natural and altered (flat, sharp) forms of these notes. A Raga can be seen as a unique combination of these 12 notes in an octave which are bound by a set of rules.

Raga in Indian Classical music is very different from Western scales as there are various rules and norms specifying which notes are used in ascent (Aaroh) and which in descent (Avroh), how the notes in the raga are combined and how they relate to each other. There are specific melodic embellishments and improvisations which define the character of a Raga. Every raga has a characteristic phrase of notes referred as 'Pakad' which represents the main character of that raga. Not every set of notes that follows such rules becomes a raga since the raga has to induce a certain emotion as well and that is what makes this concept very intriguing. Each raga has a name and generally an associated time of day when it is best performed, depending on the mood it projects. For eg- Raag Bhairav, Todi (Morning Ragas) ,Raag yaman (Evening Raga), Raag Darbari, Malkauns (Late night) and many more.

It can be quite difficult to understand and conceive such a wide range of Ragas without any system of categorization, and for this purpose 'Thaat' system for classification of North Indian Ragas, was introduced by Pt. Vishnu Narayan Bhatkhande. A Thaat can be understood as a musical mode which consists of seven notes to be presented in their order of ascent. According to Pt. Bhatkhande, all the Ragas in North India or Hindustani Classical music are variations of 10 basic Thaats which basically allows us to group several Ragas under one particular Thaat.

Here is a list of the 10 Thaats, and also the 6 corresponding Western modes which are similar to that particular Thaat taking 'C' as the root note

1.	Bilawal (Ionian mode)	Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni C D E F G A B
2.	Khamaj (Mixolydian mode)	Sa Re Ga Ma Pa Dha Ni♭ C D E F G A B♭
3.	Kafi (Dorian mode)	Sa Re Ga♭ Ma Pa Dha Ni♭ C D E♭ F G A B♭
4.	Asavari (Aeolian mode)	Sa Re Ga♭ Ma Pa Dha♭ Ni♭ C D E♭ F G A♭ B♭
5.	Bhairavi (Phrygian mode)	Sa Re♭ Ga♭ Ma Pa Dha♭ Ni♭ C D♭ E♭ F G A♭ B♭
6.	Bhairav	Sa Re♭ Ga Ma Pa Dha♭ Ni C D♭ E F G A♭ B
7.	Kalyan (Lydian mode)	Sa Re Ga Ma# Pa Dha Ni C D E F# G A B
8.	Marwa	Sa Re♭ Ga Ma# Pa Dha Ni C D♭ E F# G A B
9.	Poorvi	Sa Re♭ Ga Ma# Pa Dha♭ Ni C D♭ E F# G A♭ B
10.	Todi	Sa Re♭ Ga♭ Ma# Pa Dha♭ Ni C D♭ E♭ F# G A♭ B

This article is written by Ujwal Nagar, Faculty of Hindustani Voice at Global Music Institute.

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Star of the month

DHRUV GHANEKAR

The multi - talented composer is the founding partner in Smoke Music productions - the leading music production house in advertising, television and films. He has composed music for over 3000 commercials, several feature films and also for television.

Dhruv also performs his unique brand of jazz/fusion regularly at concerts with his band 'Usual Suspects' having already played at three Jazz Yatra Festivals in India.

Score catches up with Dhruv to talk about his recently released alubm 'Voyage'.

How has the reception to your new album 'Voyage' been?

It's been quite phenomenal. The album managed to peak on #3 on the itunes charts. So I guess this is quite a milestone for indie music! People from all over the world have responded to the music and it's quite flattering actually.

What was your experience collaborating with Qyuki?

Samir Bangara, the CEO of Qyuki and I have been friends for a few years now and we always spoke about working together. This album provided us the perfect platform to do so. They are a fantastic bunch of people to work with - totally creative and totally up of their game. And the most important part for me is that they are into music. The people you work with need to understand music the way you do. So far, it's been a fantastic association. They have gone really beyond their call of duty to push the album, promote it, talking to people and getting it out in the right places.

What were your primary influences/inspiration for your album and how was it collaborating with a plethora of artists?

The album is a metaphorical journey through various regions whose music has inspired me over the last few years. I have never travelled to Algeria or Mali, but have soaked myself in that music for a long time now.

I've always been fascinated by music from other cultures. Not pop music, but indigenous and folk music from different parts of the world. Magreb or Ganawa from North Africa is one such music that I have been attracted to. Music from Mali is also really rich and is considered the birthplace of the blues.

In order to fuse two different cultures, one must introspect and go deep into its origin. Or else it'll start sounding a bit clichéd. I try and spend a few years listening and travelling to the place to really get a vibe of the music.

It's not a quick and easy fix but the rewards are far greater this way...

What was your greatest challenge with this album?

I guess the biggest challenge was managing the marketing and pushing it out. Producing the videos has been quite an experience.. I also co-directed and edited the video for the song 'Sway with Me'. Creating music is actually the easy part, its all the ancillary stuff that is tricky and requires a lot of time and attention and it is the last and most important part of the journey

Dhima has been catching many eyes. The music video is very colorful and the music is extraordinary. Tell us something about it.

The video for Dhima, which also features Ila Arun, is directed by Razy Ghai of Asylum Films and has Goth and steam punk influences. We were fortunate to have an amazing team to work in it and everyone put their heart and soul into it. It is different from anything that has come out of this country. Social Media is a fantastic tool when it comes to promoting independent music since there is no label back it. The video already has got a phenomenal response. People have been tweeting, messaging and facebooking about it.. We have got over a 100 thousand hits in 48 hours. We are really overwhelmed by the response

How was it to work with Ila Arun?

I have done a lot of work with Ila Arun. She is an incredible artist. She has got immense power and stamina. When she sings, she can put a lot of younger people to shame actually.

Are you ever worried about selling your music?

Not really. I believe that if you are honest and sincere in your communication, the music will always find an audience.

Your album has aexplored a very different genre whereas your image is of a rocker with your band- Usual Suspects. Can you tell us more about this?

This album is quite a departure from my last release and a long way from my band Usual Suspects .I consciously wanted to steer away from an all instrumental effort and focus more on the song writing part. This album is sort of a beginning of a new journey in my musical life.

From classical music to jazz and rock, how has your journey with music been so far?

I am fortunate that I've had the opportunities and worked with some incredible people in the process. But I don't want to look back. I rather focus on the future...The unknown is far more exciting than the past...

Does working with commercial music, in any way affect the music you otherwise create?

Composing for film gives you a large platform to showcase your music. Also scoring music for advertising is great grounding for this world as it prepares ones problem solving skills.

Composing your own music is liberating as there is no brief and references to look at. The only flip side is that one has to be extremely disciplined in finishing your work.

The way I see it, you are your own CEO and have to be hard in taking calls about the music and the end product, including areas like marketing, promotions, legal, finance etc..

At the end of it composing for yourself is infinitely more satisfying!

The Indian independent music scene has recently started to come out of the closet and become recognized. How has your experiences been with getting people to listen to your music?

The scene is just 5-7 years old. The indie music culture has to mature and for that we need certain infrastructural elements in place such as venues and music schools, once we have these in place, this is inevitable.

Indian Musicians have to see themselves performing on an international stage and evaluate their music based on international yardsticks. We cannot work in a vacuum.

I think there is tremendous potential. We are at the cusp of something very big that will happen in the next 10-15 years.

Without the relevant infrastructure like venues, copyright protection for artists, artist management and booking agencies, the scene cannot take off..

All these elements are essential catalyst's for the inevitable launch that is not too far away...

What is in your agenda in the near future? What can we look forward to?

I've just finished an episode for Coke Studio, the response to which has been tremendous. A bunch of things are in the pipeline right now. You'll be hearing something really exciting in a couple of months.I also just put out an EP of my trio music that I recorded with Gino Banks and Sheldon D'silva.

DJ SARTEK

The kick-ass number Dopamine is his happy dope. It gave him the much-needed identity as a disc-gyrator and pushed him up the charts carving a space for himself in the music circuit. Sarthack Sardana could have remained a regular guy next-door with his unassuming face, had he not been bitten by the music bug in life. Emerging with oodles of energy with headphones as a spin doctor, now he is better known as DJ Sartek. Currently, this cool-n-confident 26-yearold Delhi mixer is busy creating more milestones along his musical path.

Heard you are prepping up for your first major international show in Bangkok. How excited you feel about it?

Yesss...I'm super stoked about this gig as I love Thai food, ha-ha! Well jokes apart, I have great expectations from this show which is a big one for me as there are millions of dance music fans down in South Asia. So they too am sure are looking forward to some real razzmatazz on stage as well as the ground below! (To the uninitiated, DJ Sartek will be performing at The Club at Khao San in the capital city of Bangkok, come this July 12).

Later in the year, I have also Singapore and Malaysia tours planned out on my schedule. So it's more the merrier for me!

How did the prestigious Could9 contract fall in your kitty?

At the very outset, I'd like to mention that am overly proud of my association with Cloud9 music publishing agency as it's the same house which is connected to greats like Armin van Buuren (ace Dutch trance music producer, DJ and radio host whose A State of Trance programme has catapulted him to superstardom around the world) and Hardwell (Robbert van de Corput, better known by his stage name Hardwell, is another Dutch big-room-house and electro-house DJ plus a music producer). Their creative manager really liked my track Dopamine and reached out to me. I was parallely on the hunt for a good publisher and when Cloud9 knocked on my door I was there to answer their call (smiles!). You may say that am actually on 'cloud nine' having signed on the dotted line and getting enrolled under a banner that represents the much sought-after duo.

On June 5, you had opened for Armin Van Buuren in Hyderabad. Tell us something about that experience.

Ohh! It was a dream-come-true moment for me. The feeling was exhilarating to say the least. See, performing alongside Armin was long deeply cherished as he has always been a big inspiration in my life ever since I grew fond of world music. I still can't believe that I've literally shared the stage with a legend of his stature.

Recently, Hardwell played your track Backed Up to 50,000 people at Beyond Wonderland Festival (electronic dance festival organized by Insomniac Events). Wasn't it another feather in your cap?

Well to be honest, such incidents are truly humbling. You then want to feel the ground beneath your feet, lest you topple out of an amazing daze. But you need to immediately shake yourself up and continue to work hard towards the next best feat. Fact is, even a smallest pin can make the loudest thunder. So nothing achieved is paltry in proportion. What happened is that when I gave my track Backed Up as a free download, it soon became a part of almost all of Hardwell-sets within the month of March itself. I have no idea whatsoever how he got hold of the song and its resultant snowball-effect on the airwaves. But now I can take a certain liberty to flaunt in a lighter vein (ups his collar) that he too is probably a Sartek fan (winks!).

Noticeably, Dutch boys make an exceptionally good musicians and DJs? Your thoughts on this...

A good thing about Holland besides the country being a perfect cradle for a rich culture of music is that its entire pack of DJs and producers strongly support one another and move forward as a united force. But beyond this lies the naked reality which strikes me hard in the face. You know, the problem with our country is the trapped mindset. A child as per the set rules has to first attend school, college, professional-studies and then decide what he/she wants to do with their life. This is not the case with most European nations where people ideally decide what they want to do in life much earlier, say in the formative stage and simultaneously train in the discipline while pursuing education. Thus, they get ample time in hand to not only discover their latent raw talent but to also whet their appetite and polish their unfinished skills. I mean, that's how it should be.

What is the scenario of dance music production on the domestic Indian turf at present? How is it different from the rest of the world?

I think the rate at which dance music is growing on this side of the map, India clearly tops the chart as compared to its counterparts. We, a population of 1.2 billion have finally realised that there aren't very many dance music producers amongst us. Hence, a lot of people are getting into the scene. Overseas, nations like Netherlands and USA are also swarming with producers. The trend solidly shows that the industry in this part is thoroughly expanding and it's only going to grow from strength to strength.

With the culture of disc-hopping and pubbing, visible on a rising pitch, has India finally woken up to deejaying as a mainstream profession?

Yes, absolutely. See, there was a time when djs were merely considered background guys who solely played music at weddings and events. Today, that scoffing attitude has undergone a drastic change. They are now looked upon with awe as sheer 'rockstars'. And this has further propped up many ambitious youngsters to take the plunge as a full-timer and mull over the job of 'turntable tricks' as a serious craft.

Which Indian cities you feel have a perfect club culture to vouch for?

I can easily certify Mumbai and Hyderabad in this category. They are the ideal destinations to rock and unwind in the party circuit. And I say this from my own experience. I just loved playing at the Playboy Club in Hyderabad, of late. You can chillax at the watering hole, groove to the music on air and let your hair down with a bunch of cool pals tagging along. The vibe was simply awesome!

Internationally, where do you think the party animals should hop to in hordes?

Of course, Ibiza in eastern Spain wins hands down straightaway followed by Berlin in Germany as a close second.

Given the crowd composition, which is most difficult to regulate and connect with – a pub party, a wedding gathering or a beach carnival?

I would say a beach carnival is the toughest to control as these are usually touristy hubs, attracting a mass gathering from different corners of the earth and walks of life. Apart from the challenging aspect to hold onto the audience-attention and its mood-swings at length, it's a lot more fun too (smiles!).

Eroding schools of thought

Music, puritans say, is a gift from God; an introspective exercise that one needs to undertake to know oneself. The urge of self-expression gives birth to newer compositions and inventions of instruments that enthrall us. Therefore, the practice flourishes and continues as the sound of applause becomes more deafening. Yet, hundreds of instruments tracing either to tribal society or to ancient eras have faded into oblivion, in spite of having immense fame attached to them.

The excuse is that music lovers simply got more interested in another instrument, another form of music that led the thriving market into technological obsolescence. Day by day, we are losing priceless institutions as instrumentalists give up before expert mimicking synthesizers, which although can reproduce the identifying sound of an instrument, fails to create the aura of a genuine acoustic performance of the same. The audience don't see the musicians playing and the interest dies. As a result, scientists try to recreate instruments lost and forgotten, but the initiative fails to feed the curiosity of a music lover.

Kashi Sangeet Samaj, a heritage music organisation set up in 1906 at Varanasi, houses instruments that neither have takers nor makers today. Kashyap Veena, Rudraveena and Surbahar are there in the museum besides engineering prodigies like a Tabla that also sounds like the Mridung and the Majeera. Krishna Kumar Rastogi, the convener of the performing arts society says the collection is the fruit of decades of attachments with renowned instrumentalists. The fact that practitioners have passed away, leaves the instruments in disrepair for which, artisans from Kolkata come to mend the same. Devoid of governmental aid, the society still manages to put up musical shows and conducts exhibitions of these rare beauties. Many instruments are gradually becoming less useful because of acute lack of practice on them and the society, although confident of their initiative, is uncertain about the restoration of the instruments in future.

Experts say that Carnatic music has more or less remained undisturbed as North Indian Classical music received invasions by the Sultanates, the Mughals and the British, thereby resulting in prominent reshuffling in its instruments. Professor Prasad believes instruments are on the decay largely due to absence of good craftsmen. As the practice ceased to exist, so changed the demand for their maintenance. Nowadays, the tonal quality has to be compromised as one has to go to carpenters who are not aware of the sensibilities and purposes of the sound an instrument creates. Dahara, an endangered Kashmiri instrument consists of a 73 centimetre rod with 40 bronze and iron strings, which when shaken, produce rhythmic sounds and was used primarily in Laddishah, a folk song that can still be heard of countless aged, aboriginal residents of Kashmir. Likewise, folk music of other regions in India have also received a shot in the arm. Channan Khan, renowned Kamaycha player, laments the fact that there are hardly carpenters available who can make this instrument of mango wood, goat skin and horse tail hair.

SHUBHAM DASGUPTA

Esraj and Sitar player, Bivas Samanta of the Bishnupur and Etawah Gharana has the rarest of rare experiences of running an instrument shop at Tamluk in Midnapore, West Bengal. Spanish guitar, Sarod and Sitar are the ones that occupy major share in his annual sales, but the demand for Harmonium has majorly been substituted and humbled by that of synthesizers. Although Sitar is his personal favourite, he regrets the lack of efficient Esraj and Dilruba teachers that has aggravated the reluctance towards these instruments of prestige. While speaking of preferances of his students, he says, "There was a tendency to learn the Sitar ten years back or more, but students are excited to learn the Guitar today. Nevertheless, I encourage them to listen to the ageless classical music by Ustad Bare Ghulam Ali Khan, Ustad Bilayat Hussain Khan, Pt. Nikhil Banerjee and others as I believe this is the only way through which the present generation can relate their musical sensitivity to that of traditional Indian Classical Music." When asked about the recent technological modifications in traditional instruments and their frequent exposure, he says, "I do not welcome recent modifications on those instruments, those attempts are not successful to bear the golden tradition of the old."

All is not lost as the sea of Indian music is immense to fathom at such a short notice, the heart consoles itself after listening to the success story of an aboriginal instrument of Bengali and Odia kirtans, the Sri Khol. Experimentation and strict projection of the instrument has enabled itself to gain the classical stature adjacent to Tabla, believes acclaimed Khol player Mr Gopal Barman. "My elder brother, Madhusudan Barman has accompanied throughout my journey to popularize the Sreekhol. The instrument that Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu brought to our notice singing kirtans, became an inseparable part of Bengali hymns. Trained in Tabla under my elder brother and in Khol under Prof Sanatan Saha, I received my first classical stage for Khol because of Pandit Shankar Ghosh. I was determined to promote the vibrance of my instrument to the audience of Indian classical music and had trained in classical rhythm under Pt. Shankar Ghosh. I am proud of the fact that in these 25 years, Sree khol has garnered national as well as international recognition. This is the reason why, Sreekhol has earned its place besides Ghatam, Mridangam and Pakhowaj today," he says.

Percussion ensemble was not an alien idea to Indian music scene, Mr Barman goes on to explain. "Pt. Shankar Ghosh used to conduct the immensely famous "Music of The Drums" percussion ensemble in the late 80s and early 90s. The programme was so popular that I have seen Pt Ravi Shankar, Ustad Ali Akbar Khan and the likes visiting and listening to the composition in rapt attention. Pt Ghosh used Tabla Taranga and created musical tones through percussions which is a one-of-its kind innovation in itself. He deliberately included compositions meant for Sreekhol and it was this initiative that exposed the instrument. I, in my initiative, had maintained strictness whenever approached for a performance. I made it clear that I won't play as an accompaniment but would play as a solo performer. I maintained my stand when Coke Studio approached me. I said I would play for a Khol-based song that gives scope for improvisations. This is the reason my performance is appreciated even in far off places like Hyderabad where people identify me with my Khol performance. There are very few instruments that sound as sweet as a Khol made of clay. It pleases me to notice similar duet performances in Haldia nowadays. "Taalbadya Kacheri", a percussion ensemble by one of India's finest Mridangam, Ghatam and Tabla players also features Sreekhol. Fusion music also has a room for Sreekhol now, this being the greatest example of the fruits of tireless experimentation of an instrument, which would otherwise have confined itself to Bengali and Odia folklore and would have had tough times battling the huge array of technological modifications," he said.

Such experiences enthuse an eager musician to verify his or her path to excellence. We should be thankful that technology has enabled us with countless options, not only to unravel other sounds but also to protect the forefathers of modern day music. Governmental aid and promotion in private television channels are the only ways to make people aware of our rich heritage of classical music. Before one gets interested, one has to come to know in the first place. More and more festivals and exhibitions of these instruments should be set up and special privileges for musicians and enthusiasts for such endangered instruments should be encouraged by the Government. The excuse of loosening ties with our instruments, due to one-track minded preference in music should be avoided. After all, it is a great loss when we are not even in the place to measure the harm we do to our music.

NIRUPAMA BELLIAPPA

BLaNK

THE FUTURE OF ALTERNATIVE DANCE MUSIC IN INDIA

They have been hailed as the future of alternative dance music in India, a multi talented trio who have found themselves in the spotlight as an act like no other in the country – three very diverse artists, three different musical outlooks and skill sets, all poured into one live act called BLaNK. After being officially endorsed by German DJ powerhouses Native Instruments - known globally for being one of the leading innovators in the digital DJing space – BLaNK are now the first officially Native Instruments powered act in India, and have proven to be a force to reckon with in the realm of creating innovative, cutting edge dance music.

The act comprises Manny – a DJ with years of experience and a love of all things deep when it comes to sound, Skip – a DJ/award winning turntablist who scratches at the speed of lightening, and Nirupama – a Classically trained pianist and multi-faceted musician who sings, plays the flute, guitar, and the synthesizer. Currently managed by leading dance music portal Submerge – founded by Nikhil Chinapa, Pearl, and Hermit Sethi - the act opens up about working with one of the first players on India's dance music scene. "It's a good feeling when you're surrounded by creative energies and genuine passion – that's the vibe at Submerge" says Nirupama, "Nikhil [Chinapa] has believed in us literally from Day 1, and that belief has pushed us through the ups and downs we've faced trying to create alternative sounds in a space where the mainstream often prevails. Also having a hard working manager like Srikant on our side means we have the liberty as artists to focus on our music and sets".

But what was it that started this life long tryst with music for the three? "My earliest memory of music was a Boy George mixtape I listened to on repeat" recounts Manny, "I got hooked onto this track by Pete Heller, and after graduating SAE started an electronic music collective that pushed progressive house sounds which is what got me into the DJ space". For Skip, he remembers his first few encounters that made him a dance music convert – "My first real tryst with dance music was Sasha's Global Underground 13, from there DJing was just a natural progression. DJ Qbert's DIY scratching video got me hooked onto turntablism and scratching, and I haven't looked back since". Nirupama thinks back to her first encounters with music – "My father brought music into my life – I'd listen to him play the harmonica and would play back the melodies on my tiny little Casio keyboard. Even now I play predominantly by ear and by improvising instead of sticking to sheet music – music is a medium that needs to be felt first, before it's intellectualized. For me, that's its power and its beauty".

But what sets this act apart and makes them different, is just that – how different each artist is in their solo avatars, and how that contributes to the act as a whole. Each member has their own unique solo identities, with Manny's identity as a pioneering DJ pushing deep underground sounds, Skip's as an award winning turntablist, Nirupama's as a multi-faceted musician (who is currently in the studio working on her debut solo EP). "BLaNK would always have something for the intelligent listener - what's in trend doesn't concern us" explains Manny, "Each one of us come from a very strong history and understanding of different kinds of music from different genres which has evolved over the years, and we pour it all into our live sets.

Our live sets are never static, we're always changing it up depending on the vibe of the dance floor, and what people are feeling in that particular time and space, there's a lot of musical improvisation going on. It's about really feeling the immediate moment, the present''. And what is it that pushes them to keep growing as individual artists? "I think irrespective of what's going on around you in your external environment - it's your duty as an artist or musician to always push your own boundaries, test your own limits, push yourself beyond the familiar,'' replies Nirupama, "It's when you're in those uncomfortable spaces outside of your comfort zone that real soul growth - and in turn real artistic growth – happens''.

With respect to their setup, the act incorporates cutting edge technology combined with a solid foundation in musicality that enables them to create forward thinking sounds. While Manny – at the core of the DJ set – uses the Native Instruments Kontrol D2 pair to control Traktor, Skip uses the Maschine Studio for samples and arps and the Novation Bass Station for fat bass sounds/leads, and Nirupama uses the Novation Mininova synthesizer and vocoder for synth leads/pads and vocals. How do they respond to individuals who believe DJing is all about just 'pushing a button'? "There's not much to say – it's obviously coming from a misinformed perspective'' replies Nirupama, "while of course there are DJs today who have abandoned the craft of DJing in exchange for theatrical stage antics and cake throwing, it's unfair to have that tarnish an entire art form. One just has to dig a little deeper, inform oneself, to find and listen to the real sonic gems and pioneers in the dance music space – guys who didn't need to put on a show, whose sounds speak for themselves''.

Looking forward – what's in store for the act? "We have a heavy year ahead'', says Skip, "we're currently spending a lot of time in the studio writing music, cutting remixes, and down the line a few upcoming international gigs lined up that we are excited to announce shortly''.

And finally - what's currently playing on the BLaNK playlist?

"Well Sasha has always been an artist to look up to for the way he's constantly reinventing himself, Solomun is also creating some really cutting edge sounds today'' replies Manny. "Right now I'm listening to a lot of The Acid, they've got a beautifully fragile, poetic and raw approach to electronic music'', says Nirupama, "it's rare to find that kind of a soul in a lot of modern day electronic music''. "My favourite DJs at the moment include DJ Fly and Unkut, DJ Vekked for beat juggling,'' says Skip, "DJ Craze because he's such an incredible ambidextrous turntablist, and one of the few DJs who can rock a party as well as showcase his skillsets in a routine''.

EIGHT ULTIMATE INDIAN MUSIC FESTIVALS

Hornbill Festival

(Nagaland- December)

Called the festival of festivals, the Hornbill Festival takes place near Kohima every year during December and is organised by the Government of Nagaland. The Festival is marked with a colourful display of cultural dances, indigenous sports, and folk songs that are the main highlights of the first 3 days. The biggest Rock Festival of the country is hosted at Kohima every year during the Hornbill Festival. It is believed that singing and dancing is a way of life and comes naturally to the Nagas. Along with the delicious food native to the region, the Hornbill Festival is one that will fill you up with impressions of a beautiful land and its breathtaking culture. The Festival is a vibrant celebration of a culture that's both mystic and intriguing. This year, the festival takes place from 1st to 10th December.

Covelong Point Surf Classic and Music Festival

(Covelong- September)

Started by a Tsunami survivor Murthy Megavan after teaming up with an Israeli entrepreneur Yotam Agam after the 2002 Tsunami, the Covelong Surf and Music festival is a perfect combination of surfing, art and music for the adventurer in you. Each year, the festival brings to town an amzing collection of people and a line-up of great musicians. The last edition saw bands like Filter Coffee, The F16's, Tritonik, T. M. Krishna, The Raghu Dixit Project among others. In addition to the music, there is great food to be enjoyed in addition to the variety of workshops that take place including surf workshops, meditation classes, and catamaran races to art installations. It is set to happen between 18th and 20th September this year.

Ruhaniyat

(Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad etc- November)

November brings along the Ruhaniyat Music Festival from Banyan Tree Events. Ruhaniyat consists of a caravan of Sufi Music trapezing across India in cities like Mumbai, Delhi, Bengaluru, Hyderabad, Raipur, Kolkata, Chennai, Ahmedabad, Bhubaneshwar and Pune. One of the biggest festivals of its kind, it brings alive the music of the soul of Sufi's immortalized from the past. Spreading the message of life- simplicity, detachment, joy and peace, the Sufi's voices echo across the expanse of the country with Ruhaniyat. The last edition of the festival saw performances including Dewaram of Madurai, Waee from Kutch, Kabirbani from Bikaner, Shabd from Jalandhar, Boro-geet from Assam to name a few and never before seen groups from other countries like the Vaya Quartet, the Polyphony singers from Bulgaria, Farid Ayaz Qawwal from Pakistan, as well as Latif Bolat the Bektashi singer and Whirling dervishes from Turkey and Mystic dancers from Egypt. Set to happen around the last few weeks of November and extending into December and January, the Ruhaniyat oozes with mysticism and the spirit of the Sufi and promotes the connectedness of all life.

MEERA C

Music is an explosive expression of humanity and Indian music culture which is one of the most diverse in the world has evolved over time, imbibing the best from around the world to compliment the texture of indigenous music. In the recent years, Indian Music scene has grown to boast of its lesser known side of music. Here's a list of some amazing music festivals ranging from Sufi to Folk to Rock to EDM; at some of the most beautiful places in India.

Enchanted Valley Carnival

(Aamby Valley City, Lonavala, Pune- December)

Within two years of its inception, EVC has become one of the most talked about EDM festivals in India. Set to take place on 18th-20th December this year at the scenic paradise of Aamby valley city, EVC is awaited by a lot of EDM enthusiasts. With an extraordinary showcase of DJ's and live acts in the previous edition including David Guetta, Alien Chutney, Anish Sood, Aruna, Maboy/Minx, Blot!, Reggae Rajahs etc, EVC is one music festival that is becoming very popular in very little time. With three days of camping and music, EVC is a dream come true.

Ziro Festival

(Ziro valley, Arunachal Pradesh- September)

The Greek style amphitheatre at the heart of the vineyards that acted as Main Stage was a nice, sunny spot to stretch your legs, sip a glass of wine and enjoy the act while munching on a roll. That was only afternoons. Come evening, and the spot seemed to magnify to the extent of accommodating over a couple of thousand people fighting to even stand.

The Great Indian October Fest

(Bangalore- October)

Considered India's greatest annual beer and music festival, TGIOF takes its idea from the Munich Oktoberfest. It is marked with three days of live performances, and is the place to be for beer- aficionados and music enthusiasts. Food, beer and music is a equation that is perfect. It has been around Bangalore for over a decade and boasts of a good set of live performances every year. The dates are yet to be announced this year.

Madras Music Season

(Chennai- December and January)

A auditory feast for any Carnatic Music enthusiast, the Madras Music Season takes place during the Tamil month of Margazhi and features a number of kutcheri's(concerts) - small and large. Started in the late 1920's by a few artists of the Madras Music Academy as a month long carnatic music festival, the music season diversified in time into areas such as dance and drama besides music. It is one of the largest cultural and musical events in the world with scores of artists

Rajasthan International Folk Festival

(Jodhpur- October)

Another amazing addition from Rajasthan to this list is the Jodhpur RIFF. The festival timed to match the full moon of the year was started in 2007 at the Mehrangarh Fort. It was announced to commence on 23rd October and go on till the 27th. Set in the midst of architectural and cultural colossus, the festival transports you back in time and space. It promotes and fosters the folk culture of India and has been graced consistently with over 250 artists and performers from around the globe since its inception. It is considered as one of the best 25 international music festivals. With the Maharaja of Jodhpur as its chief patron and Sir Mick Jagger as its international patron, the RIFF is also endorsed by UNESCO as a "People's Platform for Creativity and Sustainable Development".

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Genelec, the leader in active monitoring technology for over 35 years, offers the revolutionary new 8351 Acoustically Coaxial three-way Smart Active Monitor system, developed in response to the need for increasing audio perfection in acoustically challenging production environments. Offering unique size and technological innovations, the 8351 breaks new ground in electro-acoustic engineering, as the mechanical, acoustical and signal-processing designs are linked closely together. The result is a system that is completely unique in the professional monitoring industry and represents a bold step forward for the active monitoring pioneer.

The 8351 borrows its size attribute from Genelec's acclaimed 8050. With dimensions of 17.75" x 11.25 " x 11", the 8351 has a particularly compact footprint for a three-way monitor. The centre of the 8351's enclosure, features the Minimum Diffraction Co-axial midrange/ tweeter driver evolved from the 8260. This breakthrough in coaxial driver design provides extremely accurate imaging and improved sound quality, with crystal clear accuracy, both on and off-axis, vertically as well as horizontally. Aesthetically striking is the absence of any visible woofers which are concealed beneath the Maximised Directivity Controlled Waveguide (MaxDCW). The lips on the perimeter of the waveguide are the acoustic openings for the proprietary Genelec-designed Acoustically Concealed Woofers (ACW).

It's this arrangement; the Co-axial midrange / tweeter in combination with the dual woofer design which, together, form a three-way acoustically coaxial system with an extremely large waveguide (MaxDCW) across the entire front. The 8351 is perfectly at home in either vertical or horizontal orientation, with closely similar directivity characteristics as users move off-axis. The extremely smooth frequency response and dispersion pattern lead to outstanding clarity and definition of the audio signal.

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Every sub-system in the 8351 – electronics, amplifier circuitry, drivers and mechanical assembly – is designed by Genelec's R&D team and built entirely in-house at the Genelec factory in Iisalmi, Finland, to ensure utmost accuracy and reliability. The 8351 is a remarkable achievement in electro-acoustic design by a group of engineers who remain committed day after day to delivering performance-based solutions for the professional audio market.

PALM™ MUMBAI 2015

builds Pro AV segment and high-end DJ market.

The 15th successive PALM™ expo organised by ITE / ABEC fulfilled the expectations of the industry in putting up the largest ever show attracting **24,531 trade professionals** attending over three days from May 28 - 30, 2015 at the Bombay Exhibition Centre.

Modern Stage Service along with its high end brands was the largest exhibitor on the PALM show floor

Winners of the 9th Indian Recording Arts (IRA) Awards

The march of leading international brands increased. **First time exhibitors were remarkable at 22% of 166 total exhibitors.** The expo saw a whopping **90% growth** in the total floor space. This added more juice to the show delighting the trade, adding business opportunities, building markets and providing new technology options to the pros. New exhibitors featured leading global brands arriving on the strength of Indian adoption of their products, and the reputation of PALM™ taking pride in their participation in one of the world's largest pro audio+ lighting expos.

Visitors peaked on day two with 9,408 on the floor. PALM™ 2015 was supported with extensive advertising in print and hoardings across major metros. The focus on actual users and integrators in Pro AV Install segment resulted in more installation contractors attending the show sourcing solutions for large projects.

The show covered 21,916 sqm across: Hall 1, Hall 2BC occupied entirely by Yamaha, Hall 5 Annexe for the Harman PALM Live Arena, Ground 4 for the Line Array and Ground 1 for the Qube and Music Expo. A visitor survey revealed nearly 48% visited all features spread out over the 21,916 sqm.

The DJ Soundscape curated by premier artist management agency, UnMute in Hall 1, brought together some of India's top DJs and musicians along with leading music industry professionals who spoke to a packed audience on the current and future of the music business. The 5th DJ Championship directed by Reji, establishes the PALM as the gravity centre for aspiring and pro DJs.

Visitor turnout increased by 17%, keeping the profile trade only and expanding the professionals in all product segments.

The second largest visitor profile was from the Pro AV and Integration Systems. Attendees were from Event and Rentals, House of Worship, Auditoriums, Theatres, Malls, Venues, Education.

The 15th edition of the show featured the **9th consecutive IRAA Awards** and the **5th PALM Sound and Light Awards** presented to the industry at the Hotel ITC Grand Maratha located at the Sahar International Airport Road.

PALM continues to invest back into the industry platform with the objective to grow the industry and the international reputation of the Indian marketplace. The PALM organisation represents a highly knowledgeable team that delivers a trade show by the industry for the industry, and a neutral and independent convention.

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MAGOS HERRERA

SUMMER 2015 - VOICE FACULTY

SWARNABHOOMI ACADEMY OF MUSIC

What factors shaped your leaning towards music in the early years of your life?

My parents always promoted art appreciation,music,dance,architecture and literature were important matters in our daily routine & became a very natural thing for us...

What kind of training did you seek to grow as a musician?

I was interested in understanding jazz as a language and world music in general, so I always searched for these sources one way or another...

When was it that you realised that music wasn't an interest for you but a passion that you had to pursue for life? Was there any pressure to follow any other career path?

Something within speaks for you, music has been part of my life always and I have trusted in that intuition throughout the good times and also when it hasn't been easy...

Your musical repertoire is rich in classical jazz and Latin American tunes. How has travel influenced your musical choices?.

A lot not only to shape my repertoire but also to understand my real place in the world. We are a very tiny grain of sand and still unique and with something to express. it is an enormous privilege .

You have been very active in the teaching space across several countries. How has the experience been for you?

I love teaching, you get to remember that first impulse and enthusiasm to become an artist ...and we all learn from everyone !

What suggestion would you give to people who want to pursue music as a career?

It is a life commitment, a lifestyle & if you are 100% passionate about it, pursue it and become a music devotee but don't do it for the wrong reasons- fame, status, etc., just do it if you see yourself embracing the whole thing ...

Have you thought about experimenting with Indian musical elements in your work?

Yes, why not? That could be an interesting journey...

Can you tell us about one moment in your career that was truly unforgettable and inspired you in your journey?

There are so many, but I think I get inspired all the time. Music is a non ecstatic experience and I love that it is also like a marriage, takes work, discipline and effort but there are certain subtle things in the daily life that are just like miracles ...

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